

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY POD

Work Plan 2014

Economic Opportunity Sectors: Jana Hanson, Mayor, Kim Kleppe

The City of Mount Vernon supports a healthy business environment in all sectors including retail, services, industrial, etc. As a strategy for success, the City believes in asset based economic opportunity; focusing on sectors that are already successful in the City and working to retain, revitalize, and recruit in these fields. The sectors listed below reflect what we believe to be a good fit for the community.

- **Technology** – with our fiber infrastructure backbone, Mount Vernon is the perfect place for technology companies to locate and thrive.
 - Technology Summit 2014
 - Highly successful summit held in September 2014, 120 attendees
 - Plan for and expand Wi-Fi services in public places; specifically Skagit Station
 - Completed in 2014
 - Market “Intelligent City” concept by supporting Skagit TEDx events and participation in Muninetworks.org
 - Move forward on “meet in the middle” marketing plan: meeting space and support services for technology focused companies in Seattle and Vancouver BC
 - Refine marketing to tech industry
 - Support entrepreneurs (in association with NW Innovation Resource Center)
 - Marketing information sent directly to 186 technology companies in the Puget Sound area
 - Seen growth in tech sector with a number of companies located here in 2014, active recruitment underway
- **Health Care – in partnership with Skagit Regional Health**
 - Medical based research – continue a partnership with Skagit Regional Health to develop community based research models
 - Wellness based activity focus
 - Mayors Wellness Challenge, August 2014
 - Continue to engage with Skagit Regional Health in integrated health care delivery via Mount Vernon Fire Department paramedics – community para-medicine
 - Active group is meeting to develop program – including Skagit County EMS, Skagit Regional Health, and City
 - Staff attended national paramedic conference in Reno, NV – August 2014
- **Innovation Partnership Zone – Agri-Tech, value-added Agriculture & Agriculture Tourism – in partnership with Port of Skagit, WSU Extension, Northwest Agriculture Business Center, Skagit County, EDASC, Skagit Valley Malting, Knutzen Farms, Sakuma Farms, Skagit Valley College**
 - Continue involvement in monthly meetings and support of IPZ initiatives
 - Ongoing
 - Successful implementation of brewing program at Skagit Valley College
 - Support Skagit Agricultural Center concept – providing space for wholesale food hub, buckwheat mill, research and conference center, agriculture history museum, farmers memorial, farm to school staging commercial kitchen, fermentation tract lab for SVC, bread lab, etc.
 - Staff approached owners of the Alf Christensen site with ideas. Applied for State Integrated Planning Grant through Dept. of Ecology to assist in redevelopment opportunities
 - Support agricultural summit

- Initial organizational meetings completed
- Support Mount Vernon Restaurant Week – in partnership with Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce - focusing on farm to table experiences
 - Completed
- Support Farmers market at temporary location in City employee parking lot
 - Completed
- **Aerospace Supply/Advanced Manufacturing – in partnership with Port of Skagit**
 - Support of workforce development, expansion and diversification
 - Aerospace Summit, June 27, 2014 featuring Alex Pietsch, Director of the Office of Aerospace, State of Washington
 - Identify possible spec building opportunities

Fiber Optic Master Planning: Kim Kleppe, Doug Nathe, Esco Bell, Jana Hanson

The City of Mount Vernon owns fiber optic infrastructure that has the capacity to provide the foundation for business and local economic growth. The Fiber Network will provide the foundation for broadband Internet access, voice over IP, interactive video, medical imaging, Application Service Provider (ASP) services, Cloud computing and server farm growth.

- Establish relationships with Sedro Woolley and Anacortes for possible fiber expansion
 - Initial meeting with Anacortes occurred in July 2015
- Define overall operations structure and needed FTE in 2015
 - Finalize fiber policy and GIS map – rollover in 2015
 - Approved .5 FTE for IS Department 2015 budget
- Continue with Ford Foundation group – national conversation on broadband, pursue grant opportunities for public computing space
 - The City of Mount Vernon is a founding member of the Next Century Cities group
 - Mayor and Kim Kleppe attended a formal launch of this group in Santa Monica, CA in September

Infrastructure: Esco Bell & Public Works Department Managers, Larry Otos

The City of Mount Vernon is poised to accommodate economic growth with well-planned infrastructure. Funding is prioritized to maintain existing infrastructure.

- **Transportation – traffic flow optimization project**
 - College Way widening under I-5 – secure funding, continue supporting design, partner with WSDOT. Complete preparations to be “shovel ready” in 2014.
 - City received notification of grant funding of \$2.7 million from the Transportation Improvement Board in December 2015
- **Facilities** – overall strategy to maintain facilities (Rick Prosser)
 - A comprehensive database of all City facilities was developed, and mapped out for future years
- **Public restrooms**
 - Design, construct
 - Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for architect – Design Committee involved
 - Construct and project to open early 2015
 - Plans and cost estimates were developed in mid-2014. City Council directed staff to study ‘new construction’ versus renovation

- City Council directed staff to research offers of private development in December 2014
- **Review 2000 feasibility study for relocation of City Shop**, review conceptual needs for future growth and expansion, consolidation & discuss with City Council
 - Discussed February 12, 2014 in City Council committee

Waterfront Revitalization & Flood Control: Jana Hanson, Esco Bell, Larry Otos, Alicia Huschka, Mayor
 The Downtown Mount Vernon Flood Protection and Revitalization Project will protect Mount Vernon's historic downtown from flooding with FEMA certified flood protection and serve to revitalize the historic downtown area. We believe this project will release pent up economic opportunities that are so important to our community and region.

- **Complete Construction Phase 2**
 - Completed October 2014
 - Acquisition of the 'Tulip Dance' sculpture – accepted donation, artist is currently completing, installation in early 2015.
- **Phase 3**
 - Move toward "shovel ready" (property acquisition, final design, secure funding, certification)
 - Staff continues to progress on property acquisition and final design
 - Begin construction
 - Anticipated in 2015
- **Future Downtown Parking Garage:** after Phase 3 funding is secured – begin to finalize a site, begin conceptual design & financial plan

Regulatory Framework: All pod members

Ongoing advocacy is needed to express the needs of the City of Mount Vernon, provide the most streamlined process to work through regulations.

- **Marijuana legalization implementation**
 - Printed materials
 - Training for staff – business licensing, building permits, enforcement
 - Successful implementation of marijuana laws in 2014
- **Advocacy to State/Fed**
 - Lobby for restoration of shared revenues
 - Relief of unfunded mandates (e.g. storm water, public defense)
 - Ongoing communication with State and Federal legislators and staff – through phone, meetings, in person visits to Mount Vernon, and emails
- **Updated Sign Code – draft code complete. SEPA and Commerce review done. Meetings with Planning Commission, City Council, and Downtown Association completed. Final legal review pending. Once legal review is done open record public hearings with the Planning Commission and City Council will be required.**
 - CED staff & Planning Commission have completed work – awaiting legal review before final City Council action
- **Street Trees** - Ordinance update, maintenance plan, implementation of maintenance
 - Staff completed inventory and maintenance plan. \$50,000 secured in 2015 work to begin maintenance work

- **Financial Incentives Plan - New Market Tax Credit** – Plan for administration of anticipated successful application for tax credits from the Federal Treasury program & other possible development incentives
 - The City was successful in obtaining “Community Development Entity” status with the Federal Treasury, however was unsuccessful in receiving tax credit allocation. Will attempt again in the next round of funding (2015)

Communication & Collaboration: All pod members

We fulfill our Mission and Vision by working to promote cooperation with our neighbors.

- **Downtown Association** – Continue to strengthen collaboration and relationships with this organization – complete aesthetics map and responsibilities list.
- **Communications plan** – Mayor has authored a communications plan, outlining the areas that we can use to relay information to both internal and external customers. Distribute, train, and set up communications representatives from all Departments.
 - Designate 2nd PIO for emergency management
 - Kenny Bergsma has been designated and received initial training for PIO duties
 - Front line employees – ongoing training and support
- **Utilize utility bill inserts** – quarterly
 - January, April, June, July, November
- **Community Survey** – use SurveyMonkey web service
 - Successfully used for Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan update

First Impressions: Mayor, Public Works, City Work Program, Jana Hanson

An attractive environment influences human behavior, including investment, tourism, and community pride. The City of Mount Vernon will concentrate on our First Impressions program to ensure we are projecting the best possible image of the City.

- **High visibility areas** – Parks and Public Works complete a public spaces book with photos and specific measurements and needs for each space. Develop landscape “color spots” listing and prioritization.
- **Printed material** – review our printed material for accuracy and style
- **TV10** – utilize more! Special productions highlighting the Waterfront Project, and Mayors ‘Around Town’ show
- **City Entrances Project** – Mayors to collaborate with Arts Commission to create plan that will enhance our City entrances with public art
 - Kincaid Street exit retaining wall project – final permissions have been authorized by WSDOT, materials purchased, installation scheduled for completion prior to March 2015
 - West Mount Vernon – steel sign has been installed in West Mount Vernon, additional embellishments of metal snow geese are to be completed by March 2015